

**Statewide Drug Control Assessment Summit 2004 - Final Report**

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**APPENDIX B: Editorials and Columns from Kentucky Print Media**

Associated Press  
February 7, 2004

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## Team to study state's drug enforcement, treatment, education

ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKFORT — Lt. Gov. Steve Pence, who also is justice secretary, yesterday announced a 50-person team to spend 20 weeks assessing Kentucky's substance abuse issues.

It is to be part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Statewide Drug Control Policy Summit, Pence said in a statement.

The team includes state, local, federal and civic officials. It is to evaluate the state's efforts in three areas: drug prevention and education; treatment; and law enforcement, the statement said.

Attorney General Greg Stumbo is co-chairman of the

law enforcement panel, along with Cleve Gambill, deputy secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, the statement said.

The team is to make recommendations to Fletcher for a statewide drug-control policy, one goal of which would be to eliminate duplication and gaps in services.

Pence said 16 public forums are planned across the state. The \$160,000 budget for the project is being paid with drug forfeiture money and a \$10,000 federal grant, Pence said.

For times and locations of the public meetings, go to [http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov/meeting\\_locations.asp](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov/meeting_locations.asp).

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# Suggestions offered at drug abuse summit

By Justin Willis  
Messenger-Inquirer

As an employee of the state Department of Public Advocacy's Owensboro office, Cindy Lyons is well aware of the troubling relationship between substance abuse and crime.

But most of her words, directed to a panel of 13 experts as part of a regional substance abuse forum, stemmed from her experiences as the mother of a teenage girl.

When Lyons' daughter was caught smoking a cigarette on school grounds, the official punishment was a brief suspension, she said. Lyons punished her daughter, too, but believed an educational opportunity was missed for both mother and daughter.

See Summit/Page 2A

## To Help

People who missed the forum but still want to participate are encouraged to answer a questionnaire about substance abuse in the community. The forms can be accessed at the summit's Web site at [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov/](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov/).

Messenger-Inquirer  
Owensboro □  
March 31, 2004

## Summit: Statewide drug control policy will be created

From the Front Page

Lyons said she wished a tobacco education class was available for children and parents.

"I think looking back now that would have been a good idea to have her take a class before going back to school," Lyons said.

Lyons was one of about 140 people who gathered Tuesday at the Executive Inn Rivermont to participate in Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit. The meeting was the 10th of 16 such forums throughout the state to explore issues of substance abuse in addition to alcohol and tobacco concerns.

More than 35 experts were on three panels that people could address. The three panels were on enforcement, on treatment and on prevention and education.

Feedback and suggestions were recorded and will be used to create a statewide drug control policy.

Daviess County Commonwealth's Attorney Jay Wethington addressed a 14-member enforcement panel, which included Daviess County Sheriff Keith Cain and Sheriff's Detective Sgt. Jim Acquisto.

Wethington said his office

has been seriously hampered because of a backlog of laboratory tests at state labs that test drugs and DNA. The problem has plagued prosecutors throughout the state, he said.

The backlog delays results so long that a defendant facing drug charges may be released awaiting trial, he said. The defendant is often arrested on new charges while awaiting trial, he said.

"The biggest culprit is because our laboratory results are late," Wethington said. "We are not getting them soon enough."

The lab problems have prompted some prosecutors to outsource their tests of suspected drugs to other states. One office in Kentucky recently paid \$2,000 in state funds to have a lab technician come to Kentucky and testify that a suspected \$20 rock of crack cocaine was really cocaine, Wethington said.

An effort by Fletcher's administration to ease the lab congestion since January has helped, but many of the backlogged results for other agencies are arriving at Wethington's office, he said.

Acquisto has attended each of the nine previous forums throughout the state as a member of the panel of enforcement experts. He stepped away from

the panel Tuesday to speak to its members as a Daviess County resident.

More than 300 methamphetamine labs have been found in Daviess County since 1998, Acquisto said. One of every three people charged with meth-related crimes possess a gun, he said. The county continues to battle a crack and marijuana problem, he said.

Drug arrests in schools usually involve marijuana or prescription pills, he said. The area needs a drug treatment facility for children, he said, because the nearest facility is in Bowling Green.

"You think that's a stumbling block to a young 15-year-old girl to have to be out of town the whole time? Of course it is," he said.

Lyons, who addressed the prevention and education panel, said that at least 85 percent of the clients at the Department of Public Advocacy have substance abuse problems. The charges are either directly drug related or include theft or forgery charges connected with drugs, she said.

Many clients have emotional and mental problems and are

self-medicating themselves with illegal drugs, she said.

James Robinson, director of communication and social services for Ohio County Public Schools, said getting parents involved is a constant uphill battle.

Panel member Sandra Watts said people at forums across the state have echoed similar concerns about the difficulty of getting parents' attention.

During a break, Watts, the branch manager for education at the Alcoholic Beverage Control, praised Owensboro's efforts to train alcohol servers.

A city ordinance passed in February requires owners, managers, servers and sellers of alcohol to receive training. The training includes such things as recognizing the signs of intoxication, relevant laws related to alcohol sales, alcohol's effect on customers and strategies to intervene and prevent underage and drunken people from drinking.

"Owensboro right now is a role model for the state with this," Watts said.

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Jay Wethington

**Feedback and suggestions were recorded and will be used to create a statewide drug control policy.**

# State seeks to curb rise in drug abuse

Pence forms panel to host forums on treatment, enforcement, prevention

By HAYLI FELLWOCK  
The Daily News

h.fellwock@bgdailynews.com/783-3240

In Kentucky, there were 300 meth labs seized in 2002 — up from 147 the year before — and more than 378,000 marijuana plants were eradicated in 2002, according to the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

"The substance abuse problem in our commonwealth affects all of us, and it isn't going away," Gov. Ernie Fletcher said in a written statement. "Being tough on these drug crimes isn't enough. We must move beyond that to

being effective."

Local citizens may express their concerns on the matter to three panels at the Drug-Control Policy Assessment Summit on Thursday at the Sloan Convention Center from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The three panels — dealing with the issues of drug treatment, enforcement and prevention education — consist of state, local and federal representatives appointed by Lt. Gov. Stephen Pence.

There are 23 members on the enforcement panel, which is co-chaired by Kentucky Attorney General Greg Stumbo and Cleve Gambill, deputy secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet.

There are 16 members on the treatment panel, chaired by Karyn

Hascal, acting director of the Division of Substance Abuse, Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

There are 17 members on the prevention-education panel, chaired by Tim Eaton, superintendent of Pulaski County Schools.

The 20-week initiative to visit 16 cities throughout Kentucky is a precursor to the establishment of the state's first statewide drug-control policy. According to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, recommendations to Fletcher by the appointed panel members, based on what they hear from Kentuckians during the summits, will play a key role in the establishment of the new drug-control policy.

"We have assembled a stellar group of people for this assessment," Pence said in a written statement. "They are each knowledgeable in their field and are going to work to provide us with the information we need to do something about the drug problem in our commonwealth."

The assessment is the first in Kentucky to bring together officials in every area of drug abuse, and to examine the state's drug abuse problem from the three angles.

In addition to illegal drugs, the Summit team will also discuss the use of inappropriate prescriptions, alcohol and tobacco in Kentucky.

Total cost of the project is

See ABUSE, 6A

PAGE 6A - WEDNESDAY, MARCH 31, 2004

## News Briefs COVINGTON

### First meeting on substance abuse

The first of 16 public meetings concerning the levels of substance abuse in Kentucky communities will be at the Northern Kentucky Convention Center in Covington on Wednesday. The meeting for citizens concerned about drugs in their communities will be from 1-5 p.m. at the convention center. Residents of Boone, Campbell, Kenton, Gallatin, Grant, Pendleton, Carroll and Owen counties are invited. The session is part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative. The governor's initiative calls for a 20-week comprehensive evaluation of substance abuse in the state.

### ABUSE, from 1A

\$160,000, funded by the Appalachia High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area, and money seized during drug arrests by the Kentucky State Police and the Kentucky Department of Vehicle Enforcement.

"The regional summits provide an opportunity for the public to make their concerns known about

the problems being faced in their communities," said Cmdr. Capt. Wayne Mayfield of Kentucky State Police Post 3. "With the limited resources given to combat the drug problem, it is extremely important to know what the specific problem is and where it's at before developing strategies to overcome it."

The Kentucky Enquirer  
Fort Mitchell □  
February 12, 0224



# Regional forum seeks input on drug problems

The Sentinel Echo  
London  
March 12, 2004

Citizens in Laurel and surrounding counties will have an opportunity to provide information and voice their concerns about substance abuse in their communities at a public forum input meeting slated for Wednesday, March 17, in Somerset.

The forum is the seventh of 16 input meetings being held around the state in association with Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit.

## F.Y.I.

■ Regional drug forum will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Center for Rural Development in Somerset on March 17.

the public input forum, which will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at The Center for Rural Development on U.S. 27.

Citizens who require special accommodations at the meeting may call (859) 622-1328.

At the meeting, experts in drug prevention-education, treatment and enforcement will hear from citizens, officials and representatives of prevention-education, treatment and enforcement programs from the 11-county area.

Residents of Laurel, Adair, Clinton, Cumberland, Jackson, McCreary, Pulaski, Rockcastle, Russell, Wayne and Whitley counties are invited to attend

Public input is a component of Gov. Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative, which calls for state, local and federal officials who specialize in drug prevention-education, treatment and enforcement to conduct a 20-week, comprehensive evaluation of substance abuse in Kentucky.

Assessment team members are assigned to panels depending on their specialty. Each panel has assigned delegates, or panel subcommittee members, to conduct the regional public input meetings across the commonwealth.

At the forums, attendees who want to address a subcommittee panel sign in to speak to the panel of their choice. Speakers may appear before more than one panel.

Information provided at the meetings will be recorded. The panel subcommittees will review the comments and materials from the meetings and report their findings to the assessment team.

Those who attend the forum will be encouraged to visit the Kentucky Drug Summit Web site, where they may complete a questionnaire about drug issues in their communities. Hard copies of the questionnaire will be available at the forum.

This assessment is the first in the state to bring together officials in every area of substance abuse – prevention-education, treatment and law enforcement – to examine Kentucky's drug issues from each of those perspectives.

Along with illegal drugs, the Summit team is assessing inappropriate prescriptions as well as alcohol and tobacco use in the commonwealth.

At the conclusion of the assessment, the group will offer recommendations to the governor on establishing Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy. It will be designed to produce greater, measurable

results in reducing illegal drug trafficking and abuse, eliminate duplication and gaps in services and ensure that the state makes the best use of its monetary resources.

For more information about the drug-control initiative, visit the Kentucky Drug Summit Web site at [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov).

# Regional drug issues summit here next week

BY KAREN BIGHAM  
NEW ERA STAFF WRITER

**HOPKINSVILLE** — A statewide effort to examine Kentucky's drug issues will offer area residents an opportunity to voice their concerns at a public forum here.

The public meeting will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 24 at the Hopkinsville-Christian County Conference and Convention Center and brings together officials in substance abuse prevention and education, treatment, and law enforcement, as part of a statewide initiative that could lead to Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy.

Residents of Christian, Trigg, Todd, Hopkins and Muhlenberg counties are invited to attend the meeting, where state and federal substance abuse experts will hear from local citizens, officials and representatives of various

SEE SUMMIT, PAGE A4

Kentucky New Era  
Hopkinsville □  
March 16, 2004

## SUMMIT: Regional drug issues to be discussed here next week

FROM PAGE 1

agencies. Throughout the state, officials are conducting a 20-week, comprehensive evaluation of substance abuse as part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit.

The summit is meant to assess the substance abuse picture in Kentucky, as well as identify existing drug abuse prevention efforts, duplications and gaps.

Fletcher said developing a statewide drug abuse policy is important for Kentucky, which continues to be one of the largest providers of marijuana in the nation.

"The substance abuse

problem in our commonwealth affects all of us and isn't going away," Fletcher said in a statement.

"It is costing our communities and young people their health and happiness and our taxpayers the money it takes to fight the problem."

In addition to illegal drugs, the summit team will assess inappropriate prescriptions, alcohol and tobacco use.

Public input is an important component of the governor's drug control initiative, said Ryan Watts, of the lieutenant governor's communications office.

Meetings will be recorded and reviewed and findings

reported to an assessment team. At the conclusion of the assessment, panel members will offer recommendations to the governor on establishing Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy, according to a release from the lieutenant governor's office.

Those residents unable to attend, but who would like to complete a questionnaire, can call (859) 622-1328.

For more information about the drug-control initiative, visit the Kentucky Drug Summit Web site at [www.ky-drugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.ky-drugsummit.ky.gov).

KAREN BIGHAM can be reached at 887-3262 or [kbigham@kentuckynewera.com](mailto:kbigham@kentuckynewera.com).

**WEATHER:** The weekend. Sunny, highs 55-60. **Page 2**



**SPORTS:** St Averil controls his Kentucky Derby destiny. **Page 8**

## Problem of drugs growing in Kentucky

By STACY L. NEITZEL  
Glasgow Daily Times

State and local leaders met Thursday in Bowling Green to discuss ways to combat the growing drug problem in the Commonwealth.

Gov. Ernie Fletcher appointed Lt. Gov. Steve Pence to spearhead the statewide initiative after taking office in January, assembling a three-part panel comprised of experts in the fields of prevention and education, treatment and law enforcement.

Reminiscent of a town meeting, the panel heard from community members and other professionals, including law enforcement officials, jailers and attorneys from Warren and surrounding counties who spoke candidly Thursday about their concerns.

### Drug summit

*Continued from page 1*

Three treatment providers for a county of 40,000 was insufficient. She said additional treatment beds are needed, as well as a local drug court to address the community's growing number of drug abuse cases.

"There is a need out there for task forces," said Jeff Scruggs, director of the Barren County Drug Task Force.

"Drugs are a huge problem in Kentucky. It's something we need to get a handle on," said Jody Richards, speaker of the Kentucky House of Representatives during opening remarks.

The substance abuse problems throughout the state vary by region -- meth has exploded in recent years in the western part of the state, while Eastern Kentucky is struggling to cope with a prescription drug crisis, the panel reported.

"I've been overwhelmed by the amount of methamphetamine in this area," said Karen Timmel, appointed as assistant Commonwealth attorney for Barren and Metcalfe counties in January.

Most of the agencies represented complained about a lack of financial

**"I've been overwhelmed by the amount of methamphetamine in this area."**

**- Karen Timmel, assistant commonwealth attorney in Barren and Metcalfe counties**

resources and manpower to adequately deal with the state's substance abuse problems.

Warren County Jailor Jackie Strode told panel members the Warren County Regional Jail is currently housing approximately 250 county inmates.

"And 98 percent of them are drug

prehensives, statewide drug control policy.

Interested persons are asked to fill out a questionnaire by visiting the Kentucky Drug Summit website at [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov) and click on public input electronic questionnaire, or call (859) 622-1328 to request a hard copy of the questionnaire.

Contact Stacy Neitzel by emailing [sneitzel@barren-countyky.com](mailto:sneitzel@barren-countyky.com)

related," Strode said. He said most of the meth addicts incarcerated at the jail have special medical needs resulting in the jail being responsible for some \$700,000 last year alone in medical expenses.

"We as a county agency get saddled with that bill," Strode said, asking committee members if money and assets seized in drug busts could be shared with jails to help offset the cost of housing inmates who are arrested on drug charges.

Kathy Whitson, a certified chemical dependency specialist, is one of only three substance abuse counselors at Lifeskills in Glasgow.

"There are not enough of us to go around," Whitson explained, saying

*Continued on page 12*

Glasgow Daily Times  
April 2, 2004



# Practical suggestions flow at drug summit

By BETTY COUTANT  
News Editor

One thing that is not needed in the war on drugs is more laws, people attending the drug summit at Maysville Community College Wednesday agreed.

What is needed most, the majority said, is no-kidding community involvement.

Better enforcement based on a common sense approach, combined with stiff penalties that are applied consistently would also help, most said.

He has been preaching it for some time now, and Maysville Chief of Police Van Ingram's message is apparently taking hold — it takes a village.

Police, Ingram said, need "eyes and ears" of the community in order to do their jobs well. He made a point of asking people who took the microphone for specific ideas on how to better get the community involved in eliminating crime.

Rowan County Deputy Judge-Executive Tim Gibbs said involving large community organizations is a big help in his community.

When a local chain convenience store began selling postal scales at its counter, activists went to the Chamber of Commerce which has an active base of members, and asked them to take action. Chamber members went to the store and asked why it chose to sell the scales that are obviously used to measure drugs.

If that's not enough, send more people, Gibbs said.

"You let that church delegation go in and say 'Why are you selling this?' and see what happens," Gibbs said.

Once confronted, the store will generally remove offending items

such as flavored rolling papers with sexually suggestive pictures, Gibbs said.

"It's not a big part of their business. What we need to do is educate them about what these things are used for," Gibbs said.

Though everyone was for enforcement of current laws, the effect of certain policies often make matters worse, some said.

During investigation of a doctor suspected of illegally prescribing pain relievers, other doctors who were legitimately attempting to treat patients with chronic pain became a part of the investigation, Lewis County Primary Care CEO David Bolt said.

Protocols that protect legitimate doctors and agencies need to be developed, Bolt and Comprehend Executive Director Donna Penrose agreed.

Comprehend deals with patients who have drug abuse problems. Penrose spent the last couple of years herself dealing with chronic pain as a result of three eye operations.

"I was literally asked 'Could you please get your pain medication in Cincinnati because it's such a large market it won't show up on a screen somewhere,'" Penrose said.

Doctors are afraid of prescribing controlled substances for pain management for fear of an investigation, she said.

While in her doctor's office one time, he received a call from Hospice saying a woman who was dying of cancer was out of morphine. Confident that he had prescribed enough, the doctor was placed in an untenable situation.

"Do I give her more morphine when I know somebody is stealing it?" the doctor asked Penrose.

See **SUMMIT** on Page A2



Brian Hitch/Staff

Maysville Police Chief Van Ingram listens as Gen. Norman Arfack with the Kentucky National Guard responds to statements from a Maysville resident during the drug summit Wednesday afternoon at Maysville Community College. Maysville resident Isaac Jones talks about taking back "our streets, our cities and our counties, our state" during Wednesday afternoon's drug summit at Maysville Community College.



## SUMMIT

From Page A1

Another problem created by attempts to enforce drug laws is the agency that employs the offender often comes under fire and becomes liable, a situation that makes most hesitant to deal with problems, Penrose said.

"How would you suggest we deal with that issue," drug summit member Jim Acquisto asked.

Penrose suggested establishing a policy that holds agencies harmless when investigations, especially those initiated by the agency, reveal a problem.

"We don't know the bad guy anymore," Penrose said.

Several people from the community said poverty must be addressed before drug dealing will end. Though more difficult, the glamour of criminal life to young people today must also be acknowledged as part of the problem.

"Is jail a deterrent anymore?" Ingram asked.

"No. It's a badge of honor," Maysville resident Rodney Baber answered.

Finding a way to make courts order, then enforce hefty sen-

tences for drug-related offenses is also necessary, some said.

Drug dealers are given five-year sentences then serve only two months, sending the wrong message, Isaac Jones said.

"They're not holding the people five years. If you give me five years, let it be five years," Jones said.

Menifee County Sheriff Rodney Coffee said sentencing is often demoralizing for his deputies and suggested the legislature take second offense sentencing out of the hands of judges.

In a small community virtually the only way to find illegal drug activity is through investigation and surveillance which all take a lot of time, Coffee said.

"Then these folks get a fine or probation. What does that tell the deputy that sat there and froze his tail off?" Coffee said. "They get out before we get our paperwork done."

Sentencing for drug-related offenses should be similar to second offense DUI which comes with a mandatory punishment.

"We need something like the second offense DUI where judges can't divert the sentence. Our judges are elected officials, they're looking at votes like

everybody else."

The bottom line sentiment was it's time for something to be done about a problem that continues to grow.

"We want our streets, our cities and our counties, our state back and we're going to do what we can to get them back. We want them back, gentlemen; we can get them back," Jones said.

Contact Betty Coutant at [betty.coutant@lee.net](mailto:betty.coutant@lee.net)

The Ledger Independent  
Maysville □  
February 26, 2004



# Officials convene in Perry County for drug summit

By ALAN MAIMON  
amaimon@courier-journal.com  
The Courier-Journal

HAZARD, Ky. — About 150 people gathered in Perry County yesterday to discuss ways the state can take a more unified approach to battling drug abuse.

The meeting was part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Statewide Drug Control Policy Summit, which includes 16 regional forums throughout Kentucky. Yesterday's meeting was the sixth.

Lt. Gov. Steve Pence, who also is Fletcher's justice secretary, last month announced the formation of a 50-person team that's spending 20 weeks assessing Kentucky's substance-abuse issues. Team members include state, local, and federal officials.

The officials are attending the public forums and evaluating the state's ef-

forts in drug prevention and education, treatment and law enforcement.

At yesterday's meeting, regional leaders expressed concern — and some anger — about Eastern Kentucky's continued prescription-drug epidemic.

"I wonder why the problem we have with drugs in Eastern Kentucky got so big before it became of importance to the commonwealth as a whole," said Perry County Sheriff Pat Wootton. "That hurts me and it bothers me."

Ron Bishop, commissioner of the state Department of Juvenile Justice, said he noticed a sense of urgency at yesterday's forum and at previous sessions in Prestonsburg and Pikeville. "I think communities are ready for something to be done," he said.

Bishop said participants at the Eastern Kentucky forums have talked about the need for more residential treatment facilities in the region.

Karen Engle, director of Operation UNITE, a federally-funded program aimed at attacking drug trafficking in Eastern Kentucky, said progress in battling drugs is being made from a law-enforcement standpoint.

Engle said her agency has received tips from the public that have led to the arrest of several drug dealers in recent months.

But Peyton Reynolds, a public defender in Hazard, said his office is overburdened with drug cases as a result of the emphasis on prosecution.

Public comments at the meetings will be recorded and reported to the full team, which is scheduled to present a final report to Fletcher on June 28. The \$160,000 budget for the project is being paid with drug forfeiture money and a \$10,000 federal grant.

Other meeting dates and locations for public comment are:

- Today — Somerset, Rural Community Center, 9 a.m.
- Tuesday — Paducah, J.R.'s Executive Inn, 1 p.m.
- Next Wednesday — Hopkinsville, Hopkinsville Convention Center, 9 a.m.
- March 30 — Owensboro, Executive Inn Rivermont, 1 p.m.
- March 31 — Henderson, Wolf Banquet Center, 9 a.m.
- April 1 — Bowling Green, Holiday Inn, University Plaza Hotel & Convention Center, 9 a.m.
- April 13 — Bardstown, Bardstown Days Inn, 1 p.m.
- April 14 — Louisville, University of Louisville Shelby Campus, 9 a.m.
- April 20 — Lexington, University of Kentucky Student Center, 1 p.m.
- April 21 — Danville, Danville Center For the Arts, Danville High School, 1 p.m.

# New drug abuse team seeks input of citizens

## 16 MEETINGS ARE SET ACROSS KENTUCKY

By Jack Brammer

HERALD-LEADER FRANKFORT BUREAU

FRANKFORT — Gov. Ernie Fletcher's new team to fight drug abuse in Kentucky is hitting the road, scheduling 16 meetings across the state to seek information from citizens about drug problems in their communities.

The goal of the so-called Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative team is to present to Fletcher by the end of June recommendations to establish Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy, Lt. Gov. Steve Pence said yesterday after the 51-member group held its first meeting.

Delegates from the team have been assigned to conduct

the regional meetings. Citizen comments at the meetings will be recorded and reported to the full team.

Pence said the assessment is the first in Kentucky to bring together state, local and federal officials in every area of substance abuse — prevention and education, treatment and law enforcement — to examine the state's substance abuse problem.

They will concentrate on illegal drugs, inappropriate prescriptions for medications, and alcohol and tobacco use by youth, he said.

Asked how this effort will be different from others in the past, Pence said, "What we are doing is not surrendering. We are seeing if we can do things better, more effectively and more efficiently.

"Doing nothing is not an option."

Attorney General Greg

Stumbo, a co-chair of the team, compared its effort to the approach Kentucky took in bringing about widespread school reform in 1990.

"We studied education reform every year up until then. At the end of that was truly remarkable. I think this endeavor has a similar opportunity. It's a very practical way of solving the problem from a broad perspective so everyone can understand what resources we have."

Funding for the team is \$160,000, with no dollars coming from the state General Fund.

The Kentucky State Police and the state Department of Vehicle Enforcement each contributed \$75,000 in money seized from drug traffickers and forfeited by courts, and U.S. Attorney Greg Van Tatenhove, provided \$10,000 from the Appalachian High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.



# Input on drug abuse sought



**Lt. Gov. Steve Pence**  
Leading forums across state

**Pence will head regional forum to assess scope of state's problem**

**By Justin Willis**  
Messenger-Inquirer

For years, police and substance abuse professionals have fielded phone calls from relatives frustrated about how to end a loved one's substance abuse problem.

For the past several weeks, questions such as "What can I do?" have been answered with a specific date and a time.

Kentucky Lt. Gov. Steve Pence will be in Owensboro on Tuesday to gather input from residents during a

regional forum to assess the scope of the state's substance abuse problem. Residents from Daviess, McLean, Ohio and Hancock counties are encouraged to attend the free public event.

The Owensboro forum is one of 16 public meetings throughout the state as part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit. Feedback gathered during the statewide tour will be used to create a statewide drug control poli-

The event will be an excellent opportunity for people to share their stories about the difficulty of finding appropriate help for a child or spouse, said Gary Hall, senior director of RiverValley Regional Prevention Center. Hall said he plans to attend along with many of the employees at RiverValley.

"It's not a straight line to services," Hall said. "This will be an excellent opportunity for any citizen or

See Abuse/Page 2A

## Abuse: Challenges differ

From the Front Page

any parent to share with the lieutenant governor and the representatives ... the difficulty in identifying ways to get help for child, spouse or loved one."

The forum is expected to attract regional law enforcement, prevention specialists, treatment professionals and people with personal stories. RiverValley and Community Solutions For Substance Abuse, among others, have marketed the forum as a prime opportunity to become involved and be heard, Hall said.

Hall said he plans to address representatives at the forum about a common misperception that education is the sole answer to prevention.

A more realistic effort combines education with law enforcement, interdiction, environmental factors and comprehensive data collection to determine the success of existing programs, he said.

Daviess County sheriff's Detective Sgt. Jim Acquistio has attended each of the nine panels held so far in eastern and western Kentucky. Acquistio is serving as an expert on the enforcement panel.

The pervasive problem in eastern Kentucky is prescription pills, while methamphetamine labs are the biggest problem in western Kentucky, he said. Marijuana is prevalent throughout the state, and some cities have

reported problems with club drugs such as Ecstasy, he said.

Different drugs pose unique challenges for prevention, treatment and behavior of offenders, Acquistio said. Many forums have produced similar complaints about limited treatment, lack of adequate police staffing, crowded jails and lack of drug courts, he said.

Acquistio praised the forums and their ability to question state residents about which programs are working and which are not.

"Across the board, everybody who has a drug court has spoken very highly of it," Acquistio said. "It's been really good. I appreciate getting the chance to do it."

There will be three panels at the forum — on treatment, on prevention and education and on enforcement. Participants will be asked to sign in to address a particular panel. The addresses will be recorded and reviewed in preparation of a final report.

Owensboro's will be the 10th forum and will be followed by events in Henderson on Wednesday and Bowling Green on Thursday.

Topics are expected to be varied. The forum will explore illegal drug use and prescription drug abuse in addition to alcohol and tobacco concerns.

Justin Willis, 601-7302, [jwillis@messenger-inquirer.com](mailto:jwillis@messenger-inquirer.com)

### To Attend

The Drug Control Policy Assessment

Summit forum will be from 1 to 5 p.m. Tuesday at the Executive Inn Rivermont in downtown Owensboro.

Participants will be asked to complete a questionnaire about substance abuse in their community. The forms will be available at the event but can also be obtained in advance at [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov).

Messenger-Inquirer

Owensboro

March 29, 2004

# Ingram named to statewide drug-control summit team

By MARLA TONCRAY

Staff Writer

FRANKFORT — Maysville Police Chief Van Ingram has been named to Governor Ernie Fletcher's statewide Drug Control Assessment Summit Team.

On Thursday, Lt. Gov. Stephen B. Pence announced the 51-member team of state, local and federal officials who will spend 20 weeks assessing Kentucky's substance abuse issues.

"We've assembled a stellar group of people for this assessment," Pence said. "They are each knowledgeable in their field and are going to work to provide us with the information we need to do something about the drug problems in our commonwealth."

According to the Kentucky Drug Summit Web site, the overall purpose of this initiative is to provide a collaborative, systemic and balanced assessment of the current issues on which to base recommendations to the Governor for the purpose of developing a comprehensive statewide drug control policy — one that best marshals and utilizes all resources and programs to address and effectively measure the outcome of the efforts.

Ingram, as president of the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police, will serve on two panels — the enforcement panel, and prevention and education panel.

"My understanding (of the initiative) is to really look at the resources currently in place and examine what the problems are and what resources are available to fight the problem," said Ingram. "I am excited and honored to get to serve in this capacity and on the committee."

Summit members will conduct this first-ever collaborative evaluation of the state's substance abuse problem with the purpose of examining areas of drug prevention education, treatment and law enforcement to ensure the state makes the best use of its resources.

Its objective will be to offer recommendations to the governor on establishing the state's first statewide drug-control policy. The policy will be designed to produce greater, measurable results in reducing ille-



Ingram

## INGRAM

From Page A1

gal drug trafficking and abuse.

Ingram agrees all parties need to work together to combat substance abuse from all sides. Ingram said the team will look at what resources and programs already exist in an effort to eliminate areas of duplication and gaps in services.

The team's first meeting will be held Thursday, February 12, in Frankfort.

During the 20-week assessment, 16 public meetings will be held in communities throughout the state to get input from citizens and local officials about drug abuse in their areas. Team members are seeking information on illegal drug activity, abuse of prescription medications and youth alcohol and tobacco use.

There will be a meeting in Maysville on Feb. 25 from 1 p.m.

to 5 p.m. at Fields Auditorium at Maysville Community College.

"I think every community suffers from some type of drug problem. I'm impressed the administration is taking a statewide view of it and going across the board from community to community," Ingram said.

According to Pence's office, total funding for the assessment is \$160,000, none of which is from the general fund. The Kentucky State Police and Kentucky Department of Vehicle Enforcement each contributed \$75,000 in asset forfeiture funds, which is money seized from drug traffickers and forfeited by courts. The Appalachia High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area will also provide \$10,000 in funds.

For more information about the drug-control initiative, visit the Kentucky Drug Summit Web site at <http://kydrugsummit.ky.gov>.

Contact Marla Toncray at [marla.toncray@lee.net](mailto:marla.toncray@lee.net).

See INGRAM on Page A2

The Ledger Independent  
Maysville  
February 7, 2004



# Governor's drug summit rolls into Nelson County

MARK BOXLEY  
THE KENTUCKY STANDARD

A meeting of three panels Tuesday gave residents of Nelson County and seven surrounding counties the chance to voice concerns of illegal drug usage in the state.

The 13th of 16 input meetings, the gathering was part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit.

During the four hours of group discussion, citizens in attendance were able to visit enforcement, treatment, or prevention/education meetings.

About 120 people from the eight represented counties showed up for the event. Public Information Officer for the Department of Criminal Justice Training, Jamie Neal, said.

Bardstown was picked for the meeting because it is logistically accessible to each of the represented counties, she said.

The goal is for each panel to ask questions of and answer questions from individual community members.

One voiced concern came from Julian Taylor, a state probation and parole officer for the 10th Judicial District.

"The parole system is letting everyone out," he said. "We badly, badly need resources."

There are two parole officers in Nelson County, Taylor said. Each officer is supervising 100-125 clients, he said.

"Many are drug cases," he said.

The parolees are drug tested regularly, he said.

About 90 percent of the people in jail for drugs didn't have a father in the household, he said. Many of the young people using drugs and alcohol get them from their parents, he added.

"One guy told me he got it (marijuana) from his father when he went to sleep," Taylor said. Some questions went unanswered in the room.

When the panel spokesperson, Cleve Gambill, the Deputy Secretary of the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet, and co-chair of the enforcement panel, asked what audience members would do if they were able to be the "Drug Czar" for a week. Not a voice or hand was raised.

Other questions evoked heated responses.

When Gambill asked what drugs had done to Nelson County, Nelson Fiscal Court Magistrate Bernard Lee promptly answered.

"It's cost us a fortune in jail (expenses)," he said. "It appears to us it's money you're just throwing away."

"Money down a rat-hole," Gambill echoed.

Magistrate Tim Hutchins, who was also in attendance, said he would like to see more mandatory community service for non-violent crimes such as drug offenses.

A lively bantering of words took off with the next question: "What is one law in law enforcement you would like to see?"

"Chain gangs," Hutchins said. One audience member spoke up calling for a mandatory drug testing to get a license.

Kim Shumate, a District Judge in Hardin County, said it wouldn't be a great idea.

"I think the worst thing you could do is take away a student's car keys," she said.

Besides, she said, people will



MARK BOXLEY/The Kentucky Standard

drive regardless of whether they have a license or not.

"It wouldn't be a deterrent," she said. "I don't think you're relating cause and effect to the extent it will give you the result you intend."

After the summits come to a close, the statements from participants and questionnaires filled out during the summits will be compiled and sent to subcommittees.

When all the information is crunched and mulled over, a final report and recommendation will be sent to Fletcher's office - from which the state's drug control policy will be born.

There are two summits remaining from the original 16 meetings - April 20, Lexington, and April 21, Danville.

To fill out a questionnaire, interested Kentuckians can visit [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov).

The Kentucky Standard  
Bardstown □  
April 18, 2004

David James, director of investigations for the Kentucky Attorney General's Special Investigations Division, center, listens as members of the audience voice concerns about drugs in Kentucky. The meeting involved Nelson County and seven surrounding counties. Around 120 residents attended.

# Governor's drug summit hears concerns from 8 counties

## LANDMARK NEWS SERVICE

A meeting of three panels Tuesday in Bardstown gave residents of eight counties, including LaRue, the chance to voice concerns of illegal drug usage in the state.

The 13th of 16 input meetings, the gathering was part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit.

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[www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov).





Boyd County Sheriff Terry Keelin addresses the Enforcement Panel of the Regional Public Forum on Drug Issues on Thursday at the Ashland Plaza Hotel. Keelin told the panel his agency is seeing a dramatic rise in drug abuse in the form of pills, both from "bad doctors" and Internet sales.

JOHN FLAVELL / THE INDEPENDENT

## Forum addresses state drug problem

By MIKE JAMES  
The Independent

**ASHLAND** Kentucky has a serious drug problem that can't be solved solely by putting offenders in jail, Lt. Gov. Stephen B. Pence said Thursday in Ashland.

Speaking at a forum to gather public opinion for a statewide drug-control policy, Pence said prevention and treatment are as important as enforcing drug laws.

"We will not incarcerate our way out of this problem," said Pence, a former U.S. attorney for western Kentucky.

Pence was in Ashland with a panel of state officials for one of 16 regional forums to get public input on drug abuse in Kentucky.

The forums are part of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's state drug control policy assessment summit initiative, designed to examine illicit drug use from

enforcement, prevention and treatment perspectives.

To do it, a team of state, local and federal officials working in those areas are conducting a 20-week evaluation of Kentucky's drug problem. The Ashland forum was the third in the series.

Ultimately, the state will use the information it gathers to develop a first-ever statewide drug-control policy.

The initiative will assist the state and federal governments in allocating resources, said Gregory Van Tatenhove, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky.

Efficient use of limited resources is a perennial problem, said Van Tatenhove, whose office prosecutes numerous drug crimes in a 60-county territory.

"The bottom line is, there will never be as much as we want, so we have to use what we have efficiently," he said.

See D2C2 / Page C2



Gary Oetjen, head of the DEA's Louisville office, addresses an issue brought up by local law enforcement agencies Thursday during the forum.

## Drug

From C1

Also, the initiative will keep him and others in law enforcement aware of the efforts of those in treatment and prevention, he said.

"Too often in law enforcement, we tend to do our work and don't see the others," he said.

The strength of the initiative is its emphasis on finding

solutions, said Karyn Hascal, acting director of the Division of Substance Abuse.

"We've been talking about the problem for a long time. This is the first time in my 27 years in the field that the administration and the state have been behind an integrated solution," Hascal said.

It's too early to tell whether the initiative will help, said Boyd County Sheriff Terry Keelin, one of several northeast Kentucky lawmen in attendance. "I'm here to hear

what they're proposing," he said.

The forum wasn't the only chance for public comment. There is an online questionnaire and more information at the drug summit's Web site, [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov).

Also, the state can send a questionnaire by mail; call (859) 622-1328.

MIKE JAMES can be reached at [mjames@dailyindependent.com](mailto:mjames@dailyindependent.com) or at (606) 326-2652.

The Independent  
Ashland  
March 5, 2004



# Drugs to be topic of local meeting

by **SHELDON COMPTON**  
STAFF WRITER

Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment teams will visit Prestonsburg and Pikeville next week to hold public input forums centered on substance abuse throughout the two communi-

ties, according to Jamie Neal, spokesman for Lt. Gov. Steve Pence.

Neal said the forums, which will be held on March 8 and 9 in Pikeville and Prestonsburg, respectively, will allow residents the oppor-

(See **DRUGS**, page eight)

## Drugs

■ Continued from 1

tunity to provide information and voice concerns about drug-related issues.

The forums will be the fourth and fifth of a total of 16 input meetings being held around the state in association with Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit. Pence is heading the summit initiative.

During the March 8 meeting in Pikeville, the team has invited residents from Pike, Martin and Letcher Counties. The forum on that date will be held from 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. and will be located at the Landmark Inn.

The Prestonsburg meeting the following day will be run from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. at Jenny Wiley State Resort Park, with invitations to residents of Floyd, Johnson,

Magoffin and Morgan Counties.

The meetings function to fulfill a public input component of Fletcher's summit initiative, which calls for state, local and federal officials who specialize in drug prevention education, treatment and enforcement to conduct a 20-week evaluation of substance abuse throughout the state, according to Neal.

Assessment team members are to be assigned to panels — treatment, prevention, education and enforcement — depending on their specialty. Each panel has assigned delegates to conduct the regional public meetings.

Those attending the meetings will have the chance to sign up to speak to a delegate from one or all of the chosen subcommittees.

The assessment effort is the first in the state to bring together officials from each area of substance abuse to examine the statewide picture from each of the various angles, Neal said.

The end result of the effort will be to offer recommendations to Gov. Fletcher in establishing Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy, something his office says will be designed to "produce greater, measurable results in reducing illegal drug trafficking and abuse, eliminate duplication and gaps in service and ensure that the state makes the best use of its monetary resources."

Anyone seeking further information about the upcoming meetings should call (859) 622-1328.



VERSAILLES MAYOR WON'T RECUSE HIMSELF IN ZONING VOTE — B2

# CITY | REGION

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2003 | WWW.KENTUCKY.COM | LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER

SECTION B

## Drug task force stops in Hazard

### Panel hears call for more treatment

By Bill Estep

SOUTH-CENTRAL KENTUCKY BUREAU

HAZARD — Adults and juveniles with substance-abuse problems in Eastern Kentucky need more treatment options closer to home, residents told state officials yesterday.

A tide of prescription-drug abuse that has driven up crime and caused numerous deaths dwarfs the treatment

available in the region. People are reluctant — or can't afford — to travel far from home to get help, residents said, so the state must put money into making treatment more accessible.

"With no treatment there is no hope," said Sharon Hendrickson, of Jackson. "With no money, there's no treatment."

The meeting in Hazard was the

sixth of 16 scheduled around Kentucky to gather comments and ideas as part of an effort led by Lt. Gov. Stephen B. Pence to draft a comprehensive plan for attacking the state's drug problem.

The 51-member panel studying the problem brings together local, state and federal officials with expertise in substance-abuse prevention and education, law enforcement and treatment. One of the goals is to make sure all the pieces work together efficiently, Pence has said.

The panel is scheduled to give Gov. Ernie Fletcher recommendations in

### On the Web

To offer suggestions on a statewide drug control plan or to get additional information, log on to [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov).

late June.

People have made a wide range of suggestions for dealing with the state's drug problem.

Yesterday, for instance, suggestions included setting up a program to drug-test recipients of federal disability pay-

See **FORCE, B3**

**FORCE | Slow courts, no jobs also concern residents**

From Page B1

ments, in order to reduce the problem of people selling prescription drugs that taxpayers have provided; making sure faith-based groups get money to help provide treatment; and educating parents to recognize signs of drug use by their children.

People complained that courts are slow to process drug cases in some areas; that they believe politics and affluence influences local drug enforcement; and that lack of jobs worsens the drug problem.

The need for better access

to drug treatment has been a consistent theme of meetings held so far in the northern, northeastern and eastern sections of the state, said Karyn B. Hascal, acting director of the state Division of Substance Abuse.

Fletcher has not put money for expanded treatment into his budget request for the next two years, in part because the drug-control plan is still being studied.

But officials said once the plan is done, the administration could look at switching money into treatment from other programs. Pence has said it makes sense to provide treatment for non-violent offenders with addiction problems instead of jailing them, which could free up money for treatment programs.

It costs \$17,200 to incarcerate someone for a year, while the average cost of drug treatment is \$2,500, Hascal said.

Lexington Herald-Leader |

March 17, 2004

# Drug summit comes to Pike

**EXPRESS STAFF REPORT**

Pike, Martin and Letcher countians will have an opportunity tomorrow to provide information and voice their concerns about substance abuse in their communities.

A forum, set from 1-5 p.m. tomorrow at the Landmark Inn, is the fourth of 16 such meetings across the state being held in association with Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Police Assessment Summit. Lt. Gov. Steve Pence is heading the assessment and will attend tomorrow's forum.

Experts in drug prevention education, treatment and enforcement will hear from community members, officials and others at the meeting.

**See SUMMIT, Page 3A**

## **SUMMIT**

**(Continued From Front)**

At the forums, attendees who want to address a sub-committee panel sign in to speak to the panel of their choice, either in the areas of treatment, prevention-education or enforcement.

That input, along with information gathered from questionnaires available at the meeting or online at

[www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov), will be used to make recommendations to Fletcher on establishing Kentucky's first statewide drug control policy.

Appalachian News-Express  
Pikeville  
March 7, 2004

The Ledger Independent  
Maysville  
February 25, 2004

# THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT REGION

**GOT A NEWS TIP? Call 564-9091  
or 1-800-264-9091**



**MARY ANN KEARNS**  
*Managing Editor*

## Drug abuse topic of public hearing today at MCC

**By BETTY COUTANT**  
*News Editor*

The Fletcher administration hit the ground running when it took the reins of Kentucky government in December.

Part of the no-nonsense, hands-on approach to governance is evident in the administration's approach to the problem every American community seems to have with drug abuse.

As one of its first initiatives, the administration put together an assessment team to look into the problem. Now in place, the 51-member team comprised of state, local and federal officials will begin the

effort to understand the problem.

The group will host a series of 16 regional public hearings where drug prevention experts will hear from local citizens and officials who are knowledgeable about drug issues in their areas.

The second such meeting is scheduled for today in Maysville from 1-5 p.m. at Maysville Community College's Fields Auditorium.

"Citizens in Mason and surrounding counties will have the opportunity to provide information and voice their concern about substance abuse in their communities," said a press release from the gover-

nor's office.

"Public input is a component of Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative, which calls for state, local and federal officials who specialize in drug prevention-education, treatment and prevention to conduct a 20-week, comprehensive evaluation of substance abuse in Kentucky," the release said. Comments will be recorded and reported to the assessment team which includes Maysville Police Chief Van Ingram.

"Along with illegal drugs, the summit team is assessing inappropriate prescriptions as well as alcohol and tobacco use

in the commonwealth," the release said.

Once the assessment is complete, the team will make recommendations to Fletcher on establishing Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy.

"It will be designed to produce greater, measurable results in reducing illegal drug trafficking and abuse, eliminate duplication and gaps in services and ensure that the state makes the best use of its monetary resources," the release said.

For more information about the initiative visit [www.kydrugs Summit.ky.gov](http://www.kydrugs Summit.ky.gov)  
Contact Betty Coutant at [betty.coutant@lee.net](mailto:betty.coutant@lee.net)

# O THE LEDGER INDEPENDENT PINION

## HOW WE SEE IT

### The man for the job

Lt. Gov. Steve Pence made a wise choice when he named Maysville Police Chief Van Ingram to a panel which will examine the state's substance abuse issues.

As president of the Kentucky Association of Chiefs of Police, Ingram is in a position of high profile throughout the state. As chief of the Maysville Police Department, he is among the most recognizable law enforcement officials in our area.

Ingram has demonstrated his willingness to work with citizens to fight drug-related crime in our area, most recently by agreeing to increase patrols on Maysville's Fourth Street in response to concerns from residents. Now he will have the opportunity to take that cooperative spirit to the state level.

With the increase in use across the commonwealth of drugs such as methamphetamine and Oxycontin, the work of the Drug-Control Assessment Team will be vital. By first identifying the extent of the problem, the team will be better equipped to offer suggestions on how to stem the use of illegal drugs in the Bluegrass.

We congratulate Pence on his initiative in combating substance abuse and in his wisdom on selecting Ingram to serve on the panel. Both moves, we are sure, will serve the state well.



Chief Van Ingram

The Ledger Independent  
Maysville

February 7, 2004



Messenger-Inquirer  
Owensboro □  
April 2, 2004

Editorial Page editor: Matthew Francis, 691-7296

7A  
MESSENGER-INQUIRER, Friday, April 2, 2004

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- E-mail us at [ReadersWrite@messenger-inquirer.com](mailto:ReadersWrite@messenger-inquirer.com);
- Send your letter by fax at 686-7868.

Include your name, address and a telephone number where you can be reached during the day. Letters should be no more than 250 words and will be edited for clarity.

# Opinion

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## EDITORIAL

# Drug summit is reason for optimism

Watching government at work can be a frustrating process, one that sometimes leaves us wondering whether the public's interests are really a concern for elected officials.

But even those most cynical of government's role should find reason to be encouraged by the efforts of Gov. Ernie Fletcher and Lt. Gov. Steve Pence to combat Kentucky's drug problems.

Tuesday, the Drug Control Policy Assessment Summit came to Owensboro, the 10th stop on a 16-city tour around the state. The turnout was impressive, both in terms of local officials and residents who attended, and those

from around the state who served on the various panels.

It's not so much what was said that creates hope — the list of problems discussed was similar to what law enforcement, treatment professionals and prevention specialists have been detailing for years.

What's different this time is that one gets the feeling that those at the highest level of state government are really listening — and willing to do what's necessary to attack the problem at its core, not simply promote strategies that maintain the status quo.

To be certain, however, combating substance abuse isn't some-

real progress can be made. Kentucky as a whole has a problem with substance abuse. But the issues we have here may not be quite the same as what other communities around the state are experiencing. So it's important that government is listening to the people in different communities, and tailoring solutions that don't presume one size fits all.

There are a lot of encouraging efforts going on locally that provide hope that this problem can be tackled. We know our law enforcement officers are some of Kentucky's most dedicated and competent in fighting drugs. And several groups and individuals

have emerged in recent years to address treatment, prevention and education policies.

Now we have a governor and an administration who see combating substance abuse as a priority. What must happen next is to ensure that all of these groups locally are on the same page and that they understand the problem is far too big to allow turf battles to get in the way of progress.

There are no easy answers, and it's still too early to predict what will be made of the information collected through the drug summits. But the process should be appreciated, and it's reason for optimism.

### To Offer Input

Those who couldn't attend Tuesday's forum can still make their suggestions known by completing a questionnaire about local substance abuse issues. The forms can be found at [www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov/](http://www.kydrugsummit.ky.gov/).

thing that government can do alone, and that's why these forums are so important. Government can put the policies in place, and more critical, can determine the levels at which they will be funded.

But it's only through cooperation at the grass-roots level that

## Editorials

# Drug panels could have huge impact

A new drug control program spearheaded by Lt. Gov. Steve Pence is well-conceived and will address a problem that is getting out of hand in our state.

Under the program, three panels will travel through 16 cities in the state over a 20-week period and learn about the drug problems facing the state, and will then implement plans on how to deal with them.

The panels – dealing with the issue of drug treatment, enforcement and prevention education, consist of state, local and federal representatives.

Kentucky's drug situation has always been a problem, but it has gotten worse over the years, especially in the area of methamphetamine and Oxycontin.

In 2002, there were 300 meth labs seized – up from 147 the year before – and more than 378,000 marijuana plants were destroyed in 2002.

The summit was in Bowling Green yesterday talking to officials and cit-

izens about the drug problem in the area.

“The regional summit provides a opportunity for the public to make their concerns known about the problems being faced in their communities,” said Cmdr. Capt. Wayne Mayfield of Kentucky State Police Post 3. “With the limited resources given to combat the drug problem, it is extremely important to know what the specific problem is and where it's at before developing strategies to overcome it.”

We need to do just that.

These programs offer real hope in putting a dent in the major drugs facing our state.

Pence will report back to Gov. Ernie Fletcher when the initiative is done and they will decide what areas need the most help and implement ways to address the problem.

We are hopeful that the panels develop sound feedback and through their data turn the drug problem around.

## Our view

Bowling Green Daily News □  
April 2, 2004



# Drug fight

Pence right about treatment, but where's the money?

As a former prosecutor, Lt. Gov. Steve Pence is not one to shy from sending to jail someone who needs to be there.

That's one reason that even the toughest law-and-order types should pay attention when Pence calls for putting drug offenders into treatment instead of prison. Treatment is cheaper and more effective. Diverting addicts from prison into recovery would save taxpayers a fortune over time.

Only problem is there's no money to expand Kentucky's inadequate system of drug and alcohol treatment. No money to treat a disease that is eating away at the soul of families and communities.

Unlike 29 other states, Kentucky does not generally pay for substance abuse treatment through Medicaid. As a result, Kentucky forfeits generous federal funding and falls far short of meeting treatment needs.

For every \$30 that Kentucky spends on Medicaid, the feds send \$70. That's a great deal, except that Medicaid is braced for a half-billion-dollar shortfall next year even after kicking patients out of nursing homes and home health care.

In an interview with The Courier-Journal of Louisville, Pence said, "I believe that if we have to take money from somewhere else and put it in treatment, we'll have to do that."

We wish him well with this sensi-

ble prioritization. Maybe corrections and Medicaid can be reworked to pay for what's needed. But we suspect that like other worthy causes struggling to wring pennies from the state budget, this one, too, will come up short.

Delaying the opening of a prison under construction in Elliott County is an obvious source of modest savings. The prison would bring jobs to a job-

less county. But it's not needed by a state prison system that's already running under inmate capacity. And there's no way to justify incarceration as economic development, even if House Speaker Rocky Adkins is from Elliott County.

Pence, who serves as justice secretary in the Fletcher cabinet, has a promising outline for reducing the toll taken by illicit drugs.

He's starting with a review of the problem and resources, which should quickly revisit work by a commission created by the 2000 legislature that analyzed services for substance abusers, the mentally ill and the large number who fall into both groups.

Pence's review won't be done in time for action by this legislature. That's too

bad. In the end, he'll see that achieving the huge benefits of expanded substance abuse treatment will require an investment of money on the front end. And that's money that Kentucky's decrepit tax structure can't produce.



**Steve Pence,** Kentucky's lieutenant governor and secretary of the state Justice Cabinet, is leading state's fight against illegal use of drugs.

## EDITORIALS

# Cut drug demand

## Pence should seek funds for treatment

The war on drugs will never be won by attacking supply lines. The only hope for victory is reducing demand.

We're reminded of this by a couple of dispatches from the Kentucky front.

First is the report that the painkiller methadone is fast replacing OxyContin as the abuser's prescription drug of choice. Ironically, doctors began prescribing methadone, which also is used to treat heroin addiction, as an alternative to OxyContin.

That's not to say that OxyContin has lost its illicit appeal, as our second example shows. The newly released generic version of OxyContin showed up on the black market in Eastern Kentucky before it reached pharmacies.

This sad pair of developments illustrates the fungibility of the illicit drug supply. In a culture as awash in drugs as ours, supply will always adjust to demand.

So how do we combat demand? How do we fight an enemy that's fueled by physical and psychological addiction?

Expanding treatment is the first and obvious step, the one that everyone acknowledges but that no one has yet been willing to fund.

Kentucky is woefully short on drug treatment options. Those seeking residential treatment can expect to go on a long waiting list. Upon release, they will have little to no access to follow-up care.

Until politicians get as excited about rehab and hiring drug counselors as they are about enforcement and hiring police officers, there won't be any progress against Kentucky's drug epidemic. Until politicians back up their lip service to treatment with some real money, we'll keep losing the war on drugs.

We're hoping that the statewide drug-control summit led by Lt. Gov. Steve Pence is the prelude to that long-overdue commitment to treatment.

Meanwhile, we also can't ignore the conditions of social and economic hopelessness in which so many poor Kentuckians seek a state of drug-induced oblivion.

Lexington Herald-Leader  
May 22, 2004 □



# Columnist Webster's attack on drug fight unwarranted

Lexington ☐ **At issue** | March 14 column by Larry Webster, "This mob unlikely to slay E. Ky.'s drug monster"  
Herald-Leader ☐  
March 29, 2004

By H.B. Elkins

In 1987, Pikeville lawyer Larry Webster was a Republican candidate for lieutenant governor — the same job, he wrote on March 14, that Steve Pence has always wanted.

One of the cornerstones in Webster's platform was a proposal to require schools to accept every girl who tried out for a cheerleading squad, no matter her size or ability.

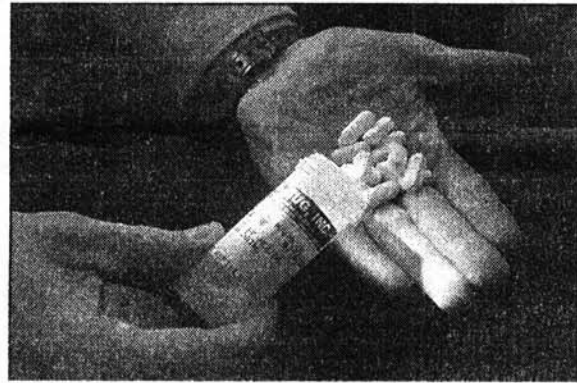
He called his initiative "Save the Heifers From Heartbreak" and said it would be better for a bunch of 200-pound "heifers," as he called them, to be bouncing up and down on the sidelines rather than to hurt their self-esteem by rejecting them during tryouts.

With a campaign platform like that in his past, it's hard to take Webster's commentaries seriously. He's an excellent satirist, but to be effective, satire must be grounded in truth.

The Kentucky Statewide Drug Control Assessment Summit, which Webster ripped in the March 14 column, is actually one of the best initiatives ever in Kentucky to get serious about our state's drug problems. For the first time, federal, state and local officials and representatives from all three equally important aspects of drug prevention — law enforcement, treatment and education — gathered to take suggestions and formulate policy.

The summit team is hearing from Kentuckians all over the state. These high-ranking officials will recommend changes in state policy, with an eye toward a legislative package for Gov. Ernie Fletcher to propose during next year's General Assembly session.

By so casually dismissing the work of the summit and other programs that seek to bring an end to this public health crisis in Kentucky, Webster thumbs his nose at the hundreds of dedicated individuals determined to loosen the grip



Illegal dealing in and use of pain pills is a serious problem in Eastern Kentucky.

DAVID STEPHENSON  
2003 STAFF  
FILE PHOTO

drug abuse has on the state.

From methamphetamines in the west to cocaine, crack and club drugs in the urban areas, to prescription drugs in the east and marijuana across the state, we have a serious problem. It's threatening the collective health, education and economy of Kentucky.

Webster's criticism of the D.A.R.E. program is a backhanded way of saying that marijuana is harmless. This is simply not true. Does Webster know, for instance, that 62 percent of all admissions of youth ages 12 to 17 to substance-abuse treatment are for marijuana dependence?

D.A.R.E. instructors have done an excellent job of educating youth about the dangers of substance abuse, including marijuana, paving the way in many communities for more comprehensive education programs.

The establishment of drug courts will go a long way toward getting treatment for addicts, but the sale of drugs is still a profitable enterprise for those who are addicted to the money they make.

Punishment for trafficking is so light that many drug dealers consider the occasional fine as just another cost of doing business, the same way many broadcasters regard the Federal Communications Commission's small fines for obscenity or indecency.

The FCC is in the process of increasing punishments to meaningful levels to make them a deterrent. It's time our legal system served as a true deterrent to drug pushers.

Substantial fines, significant

asset forfeitures and lengthy prison sentences for money-hungry traffickers are needed. At the same time, treatment must be provided to those who sell to finance their own addictions.

Kentucky is fortunate that such a comprehensive effort is under way. Many programs are doing great work in the never-ending battle against drugs.

The UNITE initiative, championed by U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers, is very much welcome in our region. UNITE is putting more officers on the street, bringing in additional prosecutors, building community coalitions, providing educational opportunities and enhancing treatment options.

The Kentucky Agency for Substance Abuse Policy and its local boards help give local professionals a voice in crafting community policies. The Drug-Free Communities Support Program helps fund community coalitions and their education and prevention programs. Countless other programs are making real progress in this never-ending battle.

The real heartbreak in Kentucky is not caused by "heifers" not making cheerleading squads, but by the drug monster that's claiming lives, ripping apart families and destroying futures. We need all the help we can get in this crusade, and Webster's criticism serves only to give aid and comfort to the enemy.

H.B. Elkins is executive director of the People Encouraging People Coalition, a community anti-drug coalition for Beattyville and Lee County.

## IN OUR VIEW

# Balanced approach

*Forums will discuss all aspects of the drug problem in Kentucky*

One of the more positive aspects of the forums being conducted across the state by Gov. Ernie Fletcher's Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative is that they are not limited to just the law enforcement aspect of the state's drug problem. Given equal billing are treatment, prevention and education programs.

That's an encouraging change from past administrations whose approach to attacking the state's drug problem has focused on investing more money in law enforcement and throwing more drug offenders into prison, often for rather minor offenses involving use instead of trafficking. Meanwhile, prevention and treatment programs have taken a back seat.

The third of 16 planned forums will be from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, March 4, at the Ashland Plaza Hotel. There will be panels on treatment, on prevention and education, and on enforcement. Those attending the forum will be able to address one or more of the panels made up of experts in their respective fields.

The Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative, which is made up of selected state, local and federal officials who work closely with those affected by drug use, has been charged with conducting a comprehensive evaluation of substance abuse in Kentucky. Information from the forums will be recorded and then the

panels will offer recommendations to the governor on establishing Kentucky's first statewide drug-control policy.

Fletcher said the policy will be designed to "produce greater, measurable results in reducing illegal drug trafficking and abuse, eliminate duplication and gaps in services and ensure that the state makes the best use of its monetary resources."

That's a worthy goal. The current practice of locking up drug offenders has proven to be expensive and to have little impact on the amount of illegal drugs. Indeed, the drug problem in the rural counties of Eastern Kentucky has gotten worse in recent years, particularly with the increased abuse of prescription drugs like OxyContin and a growing number of crude methamphetamine labs. That's why we are encouraged with plans by Lt. Gov. Steve Pence — who doubles as secretary of the Justice Cabinet — to put more emphasis on the treatment of drug users and less emphasis on their incarceration.

The work being done by the Drug Control Policy Summit Initiative has the promise of resulting in a more effective drug-control program in Kentucky. Area residents who have opinions about the state's current approach to the drug problem — either as a professional or on a more personal level — should attend next week's forum.